

WAYNE STATE  
UNIVERSITY  
LAW SCHOOL

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May 15, 2012

Senator Rick Jones  
Chair, Michigan State Senate Judiciary Committee  
P.O. Box 30036  
Lansing, Michigan 48909-7536

Re: Blight Elimination Bills (request numbers 4644'11, 4645'11, 4646'11, 5341'12 and 5603'12)

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I write in support of the subject bills intended to strengthen the ability of cities to fight blight within distressed neighborhoods. The right to own property is secured by the basic principles upon which our nation was founded, but with it goes the responsibility to exercise the right so as not to injure neighboring owners or the public at large. Nothing can be more destructive to maintaining the quality of neighborhoods or the value of adjoining properties than the existence of a blighted structure. Early stages of blight lead to abandonment and the decline of other houses on the block. For decades scholars and community leaders have recognized the reality that one abandoned house can blight a block and one blighted block can blight a neighborhood, stealing enormous value from the pockets of hundreds of neighbors and the tax bases of cities.

The subject blight bills will strengthen the ability of cities to effectively fight blight and assure that property owners maintain their properties in accordance with required maintenance standards by:

1. streamlining the lien process to assure the payment of judgments against non-compliant owners,
2. streamlining the garnishment process to collect unpaid fines,
3. prohibiting the granting of zoning requests for owners committing blight.
4. prohibiting the issuing of (new) building permits for owners committing blight, and
5. making it a misdemeanor for the failure to pay a fine for the commission of blight

These measures address significant weaknesses in the blight enforcement process now available to cities and I urge the Committee's approval of them.

Sincerely

John E. Mogk

cc. Senator Tonya Schuitmaker  
Senator Tory Rocca  
Senator Steve Bieda  
Senator Virgil Smith

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